

DRAFT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

CHECKLIST

Havre Field Office New Location Purchase

05/18/2023



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I. Compliance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act

Before a proposed *project* may be approved, environmental review must be conducted to identify and consider potential impacts of the proposed project on the human and physical environment affected by the project. The Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and its implementing rules and regulations require different levels of environmental review, depending on the proposed project, significance of potential impacts, and the review timeline. § 75-1-201, Montana Code Annotated (“MCA”), and the Administrative Rules of Montana (“ARM”) 12.2.430, General Requirements of the Environmental Review Process.

FWP must prepare an EA when:

- It is considering a “state-proposed project,” which is defined in § 75-1-220(8)(a) as:
 - (i) a project, program, or activity initiated and directly undertaken by a state agency;
 - (ii) ... a project or activity supported through a contract, grant, subsidy, loan, or other form of funding assistance from a state agency, either singly or in combination with one or more other state agencies; or
 - (iii) ... a project or activity authorized by a state agency acting in a land management capacity for a lease, easement, license, or other authorization to act.
- It is not clear without preparation of an EA whether the proposed project is a major one significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. (ARM 12.2.430(3)(a));
- FWP has not otherwise implemented the interdisciplinary analysis and public review purposes listed in ARM 12.2.430(2) (a) and (d) through a similar planning and decision-making process (ARM 12.2.430(3)(b));
- Statutory requirements do not allow sufficient time for the FWP to prepare an EIS (ARM 12.2.430(3)(c));
- The project is not specifically excluded from MEPA review according to § 75-1-220(8)(b) or ARM 12.2.430(5); or
- As an alternative to preparing an EIS, prepare an EA whenever the project is one that might normally require an EIS, but effects which might otherwise be deemed significant appear to be mitigable below the level of significance through design, or enforceable controls or stipulations or both imposed by the agency or other government agencies. For an EA to suffice in this instance, the agency must determine that all the impacts of the proposed project have been accurately identified, that they will be mitigated below the level of significance, and that no significant impact is likely to occur. The agency may not consider compensation for purposes of determining that impacts have been mitigated below the level of significance (ARM 12.2.430(4)).

MEPA is procedural; its intent is to ensure that impacts to the environment associated with a proposed project are fully considered and the public is informed of potential impacts resulting from the project.

II. Background and Description of Proposed Project

Name of Project: Havre Area Field Office Acquisition

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) proposes to purchase the property located at 21 River Road, Havre MT 59501. For the past 27 years, FWP has leased the current Havre Field Office location at 2165 U.S. Hwy 2, Havre, MT 59501. At the current field office location, office space, retail space, storage space and shop space are limited, and FWP has outgrown the capacity of the existing facility.

During the 2021 and 2023 legislative sessions, funding was approved under HB5 for the purpose of purchasing and establishing a new FWP field office in Havre, using state special and federal funding. FWP has reviewed several

options for new field office locations, ranging from vacant property to properties with existing buildings and associated structures. The property proposed for purchase sits on 9.15 acres along the north side of the Milk River, located on the north side of the town of Havre. Existing structures on the property include a home, a shop, and several outbuildings. The proposed project would provide FWP the needed space and facilities to operate more efficiently and effectively, as well as provide greater benefits to the public.

The existing home would be remodeled to create office space, a meeting space, and retail space to increase FWP capacity and improve the overall customer service experience. A parking lot would be constructed along with approaches to River Road for improved public access, particularly when towing or driving larger recreational vehicles. The existing shop would be finished and improved to accommodate maintenance, construction, additional office space, and other program needs. A secured storage area would be constructed to accommodate outdoor equipment storage. Open grassy spaces and wooded areas near the Milk River would be available and utilized for public outdoor education and recreation, such as hunter education, birding, and plant identification. Public access to the Milk River would be available for fishing and river floating opportunities. These actions would improve FWP functionality and efficiency; customer service; storage capabilities; security of FWP resources; maintenance capacity; and the outdoor recreation and educational opportunities offered to the public.

The proposed project is also subject to approval by the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission). If final approval is given by the Commission, it is anticipated the proposed purchase would be completed by September of 2023. Project planning and design would be initiated thereafter, with remodeling and construction to continue into 2024, prior to FWP moving its current office to the proposed new location. Following project planning and design, a subsequent environmental review may be required for the remodeling and construction phase of the proposed project, as deemed necessary. It is FWP's objective to occupy the new field office in late 2024 or early 2025. Periodic construction, maintenance and planning adjustments are expected to be necessary through December of 2026.

Affected Area / Location of Proposed Project:

- Legal Description
 - Latitude/Longitude: 48.55841,-109.67811
 - Section, Township, and Range: S05, T32 N, R16 E
 - Town/City, County, Montana: Havre, Hill County, MT
- Location Map

21 River Road, Havre MT 59501



21 River Road Property Boundary



Map produced by: Drew Henry
5/15/2023

Background Imagery from ESRI. Boundary drawn using Cadastral data.

III. Purpose and Need

The EA must include a description of the purpose and need or benefits of the proposed project. ARM 12.2.432(3)(b). Benefits of the proposed project refer to benefits to the resource, public, department, state, and/or other.

The proposed project would establish a new location for the FWP Havre Area Field Office. Long-term goals of the project include the following:

- Improved workspaces for FWP employees
- Increased storage space for FWP equipment and vehicles
- Increased retail space to provide better public customer service
- Increased FWP and public parking space with ADA accessibility
- Public outdoor recreation and educational opportunities

These objectives would provide the following benefits

- Improved FWP functionality and efficiency
- Improved customer service
- Improved equipment storage and security;

- Increased maintenance capacity
- New outdoor recreation and educational opportunities available to the public.

FWP's objective is to finalize the purchase of the property by September of 2023. Facility planning and design would begin immediately, with the objective to occupy the location in late 2024 or early 2025. Periodic construction, maintenance and planning adjustments are expected to be necessary until December 2026.

If FWP prepared a cost/benefit analysis before completion of the EA, the EA must contain the cost/benefit analysis or a reference to it. ARM 12.2.432(3)(b).

	Yes*	No
Was a cost/benefit analysis prepared for the proposed project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

* If yes, a copy of the cost/benefit analysis prepared for the proposed project is included in Attachment A to this Draft EA

IV. Other Agency Regulatory Responsibilities

FWP must list any federal, state, and/or local agencies that have overlapping or additional jurisdiction, or environmental review responsibility for the proposed project, as well as permits, licenses, and other required authorizations. ARM 12.2.432(3)(c).

A list of other required local, state, and federal approvals, such as permits, certificates, and/or licenses from affected agencies is included in **Table 1** below. **Table 1** provides a summary of requirements but does not necessarily represent a complete and comprehensive list of all permits, certificates, or approvals needed for the proposed project. Agency decision-making is governed by state and federal laws, including statutes, rules, and regulations, that form the legal basis for the conditions the proposed project must meet to obtain necessary permits, certificates, licenses, or other approvals. Further, these laws set forth the conditions under which each agency could deny the necessary approvals.

Table 1: Federal, State, and/or Local Regulatory Responsibilities

Agency	Type of Authorization (permit, license, stipulation, other)	Purpose
FWP Heritage Program; Montana State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural Resource Assessment Survey	Identification of historic and/or archeological sites located within or near the proposed project area.
FWP	Noxious Weed Management Plan	Control the spread of noxious weeds on FWP properties

V. List of Mitigations, Stipulations

Mitigations, stipulations, and other *enforceable* controls required by FWP, or another agency, may be relied upon to limit potential impacts associated with a proposed Project. The table below lists and evaluates enforceable conditions FWP may rely on to limit potential impacts associated with the proposed Project. ARM 12.2.432(3)(g).

Table 2: Listing and Evaluation of Enforceable Mitigations Limiting Impacts

Are enforceable controls limiting potential impacts of the proposed action? If not, no further evaluation is needed.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, are these controls being relied upon to limit impacts below the level of significance? If yes, list the enforceable control(s) below	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Enforceable Control	Responsible Agency	Authority (Rule, Permit, Stipulation, Other)	Effect of Enforceable Control on Proposed Project
Identification and protection of cultural resources	State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	Cultural Assessment and Inventory	Prior to implementation, FWP would hire a cultural resource consultant to perform an inventory. If cultural resources warranted for protection are discovered, FWP would apply protections to avoid disturbing these sites. If cultural artifacts were to be discovered during implementation of the project, FWP would cease activities and contact the State Historic Preservation Office, and potentially adjust the project design to avoid impacting these resources.
Noxious Weed Monitoring and Mitigation	FWP	FWP Noxious Weed Guidelines	Limit the spread of noxious weeds

VI. Alternatives Considered

In addition to the proposed project, and as required by MEPA, FWP analyzes the "No-Action" alternative in this EA. Under the "No Action" alternative, the proposed project would not occur. Therefore, no additional impacts to the physical environment or human population in the analysis area would occur. The "No Action" alternative forms the baseline from which the potential impacts of the proposed Project can be measured.

Under the No Action alternative FWP would remain at its current leased location. The existing conditions leading FWP to seek a new facility would continue and FWP would continue to search for available property for a new Havre Field Office.

	Yes*	No
Were any additional alternatives considered and dismissed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

* If yes, a list and description of the other alternatives considered, but not carried forward for detailed review is included below

VII. Summary of Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project on the Physical Environment and Human Population

The impacts analysis identifies and evaluates **direct**, **secondary**, and **cumulative impacts**.

- **Direct impacts** are those that occur at the same time and place as the action that triggers the effect.
- **Secondary impacts** "are further impacts to the human environment that may be stimulated or induced by or otherwise result from a direct impact of the action." ARM 12.2.429(18).
- **Cumulative impacts** "means the collective impacts on the human environment of the proposed action when considered in conjunction with other past and present actions related to the proposed action by location or

generic type. Related future actions must also be considered when these actions are under concurrent consideration by any state agency through pre-impact statement studies, separate impact statement evaluation, or permit processing procedures.” ARM 12.2.429(7).

Where impacts are expected to occur, the impact analysis estimates the **extent, duration, frequency, and severity** of the impact. The duration of an impact is quantified as follows:

- **Short-Term:** impacts that would not last longer than the proposed project.
- **Long-Term:** impacts that would remain or occur following the proposed project.

The severity of an impact is measured using the following:

- **No Impact:** there would be no change from current conditions.
- **Negligible:** an adverse or beneficial effect would occur but would be at the lowest levels of detection.
- **Minor:** the effect would be noticeable but would be relatively small and would not affect the function or integrity of the resource.
- **Moderate:** the effect would be easily identifiable and would change the function or integrity of the resource.
- **Major:** the effect would irretrievably alter the resource.

Some impacts may require mitigation. As defined in ARM 12.2.429, mitigation means:

- Avoiding an impact by not taking a certain action or parts of a project;
- Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of a project and its implementation;
- Rectifying an impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment; or
- Reducing or eliminating an impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of a project or the time period thereafter that an impact continues.

A list of any mitigation strategies including, but not limited to, design, enforceable controls or stipulations, or both, as applicable to the proposed project is included in **Section VI** above.

FWP must analyze impacts to the physical and human environment for each alternative considered. The proposed project considered the following alternatives:

- **Alternative 1: No Action. Evaluation and Summary of Potential Impacts on the Physical Environment and Human Population**

Under the “No Action” alternative, the proposed project would not occur. Therefore, no additional impacts to the physical environment or human population in the analysis area would occur. The “No Action” alternative forms the baseline from which the potential impacts of the proposed Project can be measured.

- **Alternative 2: Proposed Project. Evaluation and Summary of Potential Impacts on the Physical Environment and Human Population**

See **Table 4** (Impacts on Physical Environment) and **Table 5** (Impacts on Human Population) below.

Table 3 - Potential Impacts of Alternative 2: Proposed Project on the Physical Environment

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	Duration of Impact			Severity of Impact					Summary of Potential Direct, Secondary, and Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures
	None	Short-Term	Long-Term	None	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	
Terrestrial, avian, and aquatic life and habitats	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to terrestrial, avian, or aquatic life would be expected as a result of this project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP field office location. Therefore, no impacts would occur because of the proposed project.
Water quality, quantity, and distribution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution are expected as a result of this project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP field office location. This project would not impact any water quality, quantity or distribution.
Geology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to geology or geological processes in and around the proposed project location are expected as a result of this project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP field office location. Therefore, the proposed project would not have an impact to geology.
Soil quality, stability, and moisture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to soil quality, stability, and moisture would be expected as a result of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP field office location. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact soil quality, stability, and moisture.
Vegetation cover, quantity, and quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to vegetation cover, quantity, and quality would be expected as a result of this project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP field office location. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact vegetation cover, quantity, and quality.
Aesthetics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to aesthetics would be expected as a result of this project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP field

									office location. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact aesthetics.
Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to air quality would be expected as a result of this project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP field office location. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact air quality.
Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources would be expected as a result of this project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP field office location. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources.
Historical and archaeological sites	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to historic and archaeological sites would be expected because of the proposed project. In keeping with the Montana Antiquities Act and related regulations (ARM 12.8.501-12.8.510), all undertakings on state lands are assessed by a qualified archaeologist or historian for their potential to affect cultural resources. The process for this assessment may include a cultural resource inventory and evaluation of cultural resources within or near the project area, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office. FWP also consults with all Tribal Historic Preservation Offices affiliated with each property in accordance with FWP's Tribal Consultation Guidelines. If cultural resources within or near the project area are recorded and are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, they will be protected from adverse impacts through adjustments to the project design or cancellation of the project if no design alternatives are available. If cultural resources are unexpectedly discovered during project implementation, FWP would cease implementation and contact FWP's Heritage Program for further evaluation.

Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air, and energy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to demands on the environmental resources of land, water, air, and energy would be expected because of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP office location. Therefore, no impacts to the demands on environmental resources of land, water, air, and energy would be expected because of the proposed project.
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Table 4 - Potential Impacts of Alternative 2: Proposed Project on the Human Population

HUMAN POPULATION	Duration of Impact			Severity of Impact					
Resource	None	Short-Term	Long-Term	None	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Summary of Potential Direct, Secondary, and Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures
Social structures and mores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts would be expected because of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP office location. The proposed project would establish a new location for a state government office in a location which currently accommodates a single-family home with some agricultural practices. Because land-use would change, the proposed project would impact pre-project social structures, customs, values, and conventions in the affected area. However, any impacts would be long-term and negligible.
Cultural uniqueness and diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant impacts would be expected because of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP office location, Therefore, no impacts to existing cultural uniqueness and diversity of the affected area would be expected because of the proposed project.

Access to and quality of recreational and wilderness activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts would be expected because of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP office location. The property is currently zoned for agriculture and would be re-zoned to residential 2. No Wilderness areas exist in the affected area and no existing recreational opportunities would be displaced because of the property purchase. Therefore, no impacts to Wilderness or recreation activities would occur because of the proposed project.
Local and state tax base and tax revenues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts would be expected because of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP office location. The proposed project would require a zoning change from “agricultural” to “residential 2”, which has the potential to increase the local tax base. Any impacts would be long-term, minor, and beneficial.
Agricultural or Industrial production	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts would be expected because of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP office location. No industrial operations would be impacted by the proposed project. The proposed project would require a zoning change from “agricultural” to “residential 2”. Further, the proposed project would remove grazing of several head of livestock from the riparian area and pasture, and some small acreage hay production may no longer occur. Any impacts would be long-term and minor.
Human health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts would be expected because of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP office. Therefore, no impacts to human health and safety would be expected because of the proposed project.
Quantity and distribution of employment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts would be expected because of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP office

									location. Therefore, no impacts would be expected because of the proposed project.
Distribution and density of population and housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to the distribution and density of population and housing would be expected because of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP office location. Therefore, no impacts to the distribution and density of population and housing in the area affected by the proposed project would be expected because of the proposed project.
Demands for government services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to the demands for government services in the affected area would be expected because of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of property for a new FWP office location. Some government resources would be needed to facilitate the purchase the proposed property. During the 2021 and 2023 legislative sessions, funding was approved under HB5 for the purpose of purchasing and establishing a new FWP field office in Havre, using state special and federal funding. Any impacts would be short-term, minor, and consistent with legislative intent.
Industrial, agricultural, and commercial activity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to industrial, agricultural, and commercial activity would be expected because of the proposed project. The proposed project constitutes the purchase of land for a new FWP office location and would not disturb or otherwise impact any industrial or commercial properties or operations. The proposed project would require a zoning change from "agricultural" to "residential 2". Further, the proposed project would eliminate the grazing activity of several head of livestock from the existing riparian area and pasture. Also, some small acreage hay production may be displaced by the proposed project. The proposed project would be limited to 9.15 acres of land currently zoned as agricultural being re-zoned to residential 2 property. Therefore, any impacts to agricultural activity would be long-term and negligible.

Locally adopted environmental plans and goals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to locally adopted environmental plans and goals would be expected because of the proposed project. FWP is unaware of any locally adopted environmental plans or goals that may be impacted by the proposed project. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to locally adopted environmental plans and goals would be expected because of the proposed project.
Other appropriate social and economic circumstances	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant adverse impacts to any other appropriate social and economic circumstances would be expected because of the proposed project. FWP is unaware of any other appropriate social and economic circumstances that may be impacted by the proposed project. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to other appropriate social and economic circumstances would be expected because of the proposed project.

Table 5: Determining the Significance of Impacts on the Quality of the Human Environment

<p>If the EA identifies impacts associated with the proposed project FWP must determine the significance of the impacts. ARM 12.2.431. This determination forms the basis for FWP's decision as to whether it is necessary to prepare an environmental impact statement.</p> <p>According to the applicable requirements of ARM 12.2.431, FWP must consider the criteria identified in this table to determine the significance of each impact on the quality of the human environment. The significance determination is made by giving weight to these criteria in their totality. For example, impacts identified as moderate or major in severity may not be significant if the duration is short-term. However, moderate or major impacts of short-term duration may be significant if the quantity and quality of the resource is limited and/or the resource is unique or fragile. Further, moderate or major impacts to a resource may not be significant if the quantity of that resource is high or the quality of the resource is not unique or fragile.</p>	
Criteria Used to Determine Significance	
1	<p>The severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the occurrence of the impact</p> <p>"Severity" describes the density of the potential impact, while "extent" describes the area where the impact will likely occur, e.g., a project may propagate ten noxious weeds on a surface area of 1 square foot. Here, the impact may be high in severity, but over a low extent. In contrast, if ten noxious weeds were distributed over ten acres, there may be low severity over a larger extent.</p>

	“Duration” describes the time period during which an impact may occur, while “frequency” describes how often the impact may occur, e.g., an operation that uses lights to mine at night may have frequent lighting impacts during one season (duration).
2	The probability that the impact will occur if the proposed project occurs; or conversely, reasonable assurance in keeping with the potential severity of an impact that the impact will not occur
3	Growth-inducing or growth-inhibiting aspects of the impact, including the relationship or contribution of the impact to cumulative impacts
4	The quantity and quality of each environmental resource or value that would be affected, including the uniqueness and fragility of those resources and values
5	The importance to the state and to society of each environmental resource or value that would be affected
6	Any precedent that would be set as a result of an impact of the proposed project that would commit FWP to future actions with significant impacts or a decision in principle about such future actions
7	Potential conflict with local, state, or federal laws, requirements, or formal plans

VIII. Private Property Impact Analysis (Takings)

The 54th Montana Legislature enacted the Private Property Assessment Act, now found at § 2-10-101. The intent was to establish an orderly and consistent process by which state agencies evaluate their proposed projects under the "Takings Clauses" of the United States and Montana Constitutions. The Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution provides: "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." Similarly, Article II, Section 29 of the Montana Constitution provides: "Private property shall not be taken or damaged for public use without just compensation..."

The Private Property Assessment Act applies to proposed agency projects pertaining to land or water management or to some other environmental matter that, if adopted and enforced without due process of law and just compensation, would constitute a deprivation of private property in violation of the United States or Montana Constitutions.

The Montana State Attorney General's Office has developed guidelines for use by state agencies to assess the impact of a proposed agency project on private property. The assessment process includes a careful review of all issues identified in the Attorney General's guidance document (Montana Department of Justice 1997). If the use of the guidelines and checklist indicates that a proposed agency project has taking or damaging implications, the agency must prepare an impact assessment in accordance with Section 5 of the Private Property Assessment Act.

Table 6: Private Property Assessment (Takings)

PRIVATE PROPERTY ASSESMENT ACT (PPAA)			
Does the Proposed Action Have Takings Implications under the PPAA?	Question #	Yes	No
Does the project pertain to land or water management or environmental regulations affecting private property or water rights?	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the action result in either a permanent or an indefinite physical occupation of private property?	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the action deprive the owner of all economically viable uses of the property?	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the action require a property owner to dedicate a portion of property or to grant an easement? (If answer is NO, skip questions 4a and 4b and continue with question 5)	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is there a reasonable, specific connection between the government requirement and legitimate state interest?	4a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the government requirement roughly proportional to the impact of the proposed use of the property?	4b	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the action deny a fundamental attribute of ownership?	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the action have a severe impact of the value of the property?	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the action damage the property by causing some physical disturbance with respect to the property in excess of that sustained by the public general? (If the answer is NO, skip questions 7a-7c.)	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the impact of government action direct, peculiar, and significant?	7a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the government action resulted in the property becoming practically inaccessible, waterlogged, or flooded?	7b	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the government action diminished property values by more than 30% and necessitated the physical taking of adjacent property or property across a public way from the property in question?	7c	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the proposed action result in taking or damaging implications?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Taking or damaging implications exist if **YES** is checked in response to Question 1 and also to any one or more of the following questions: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7a, 7b, 7c; or if **NO** is checked in response to question 4a or 4b.

If taking or damaging implications exist, the agency must comply with MCA § 2-10-105 of the PPAA, to include the preparation of a taking or damaging impact assessment. Normally, the preparation of an impact assessment will require consultation with agency legal staff.

Alternatives:

The analysis under the Private Property Assessment Act, §§ 2-10-101 through -112, MCA, indicates no impact. FWP does not plan to impose conditions that would restrict the regulated person's use of private property to constitute a taking.

IX. Public Participation

The level of analysis in an EA will vary with the complexity and seriousness of environmental issues associated with a proposed action. The level of public interest will also vary. FWP is responsible for adjusting public review to match these factors (ARM 12.2.433(1)). Because FWP determines the proposed action will result in limited environmental impact, and little public interest has been expressed, FWP determines the following public notice strategy will provide an appropriate level of public review:

- An EA is a public document and may be inspected upon request. Any person may obtain a copy of an EA by making a request to FWP. If the document is out-of-print, a copying charge may be levied (ARM 12.2.433(2)).
- Public notice will be served on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website at:
<https://fwp.mt.gov/news/public-notices>
- Copies will be distributed to neighboring landowners to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project and opportunity for review and comment on the proposed action.
- FWP maintains a mailing list of persons interested in a particular action or type of action. FWP will notify all interested persons and distribute copies of the EA to those persons for review and comment (ARM 12.2.433(3)).
- FWP will issue public notice in the following newspaper periodical(s) on the date(s) indicated.

Newspaper / Periodical	Date(s) Public Notice Issued
Havre Daily News	05/18/2023

- Public notice will announce the availability of the EA, summarize its content, and solicit public comment.
- FWP will conduct one (1) public meeting to provide information about the proposed project. The meeting details are as follows:
 - Location: FWP Havre Area Resource Office, 2165 Hwy 2 East, Havre, MT 59501
 - Date: May 25th, 2023
 - Time: 6:00pm
- **Duration of Public Comment Period:** The public comment period begins on the date of publication of legal notice in area newspapers (see above). Written or e-mailed comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., MST, on the last day of public comment, as listed below:

Length of Public Comment Period: 15 days

Public Comment Period Begins: May 18, 2023

Public Comment Period Ends: June 1, 2023

Comments must be addressed to the FWP contact, as listed below.

○ **Where to Mail or Email Comments on the Draft EA:**

Name: DREW HENRY- REGION 6 SUPERVISOR

Email: dhenry@mt.gov

Mailing Address:

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

1 Airport Rd., Glasgow MT 59230

X. Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis

NO further analysis is needed for the proposed action	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FWP must conduct EIS level review for the proposed action	<input type="checkbox"/>

XI. EA Preparation and Review

	Name	Title
EA prepared by:	Drew Henry	Region 6 Supervisor
EA reviewed by:	Eric Merchant	MEPA Coordinator